Subject: Chat with Andrew Stein
From: Andrew Stein <steinlink@gmail.com>
To: barriticus@gmail.com

Andrew: if you had the capacity to fund a video game, right now
Andrew: what would it look like?
me: it would be sandboxy with an open world yet with simple graphics so as to allow for Dwarf Fortess-esque detail in a sort of Morrowind format
me: as in, most of the processing power would go to detail and AI
me: that's what a lot of people want and which they don't get from any major publishers
Andrew: I'm going to build a game
me: good
Andrew: that game
Andrew: that you just said
me: perfect
Andrew: name?
me: also, I just signed a contract with a major literary agent to do the book on Anonymous, which he thinks he can get sold next month
me: so I'll be getting somewhere between 15 and 20 k for first round of advance and then another 15 or 20 a few months later upon delivery of manuscript
Andrew: swell, you should get health insurance
me: and we've already got production companies asking for movie rights
me: I have health insurance, my mom put me on her plan again
me: I just didn't have it for a few months this year and for a slightly longer time a couple years ago
Andrew: says the big time hollywood screenwriter
me: also
me: got me an xbox
me: again
me: and Just Cause 2
me: which you should get
Andrew: no possible chance
Andrew: my game time budget is exhausted with hypotheticals
me: oh, and I have to go to Boston to do some work on this book at some point soon so I'll drop by NYC as well
Andrew: don't forget to bring a towel
Andrew: you should always bring a towel
me: you're the worst character ever, Towlie
Andrew: give me 5 minutes of game description
Andrew: simple how?
me: simple as in graphically, it should be no more demanding than Morrowind

me: while having the detail of Dwarf Fortress
me: and the NPCs should be on par with what was promised with Oblivion
me: perhaps even less graphically demanding than Morrowind so as to better accommodate detail and AI
Andrew: I cant do morrowind
me: and it shouldn't have a fixed world
Andrew: or even close, really
Andrew: good, I cant do that either
me: good, then go with Minecraft level graphics or less
me: have the world generate in way similar to Dwarf Fortress
me: I really recommend you read through Legends mode on latest DF release
Andrew: Im going to start with very simple terrain generation
Andrew: ill come back to it when I have a working core
me: and when the new release comes out, play a couple of rounds of adventure mode to see how the world shapes up
me: okay
Andrew: http://mrdoob.github.com/three.js/examples/webgl_geometry_terrain.html
Andrew: is pretty much teh exact terrain algorithm I'll use, with less volatility and a colormap
me: I'll provide any content that can be handled without programming skills, etc
me: nice, gotcha
me: random attributes involving relationships between NPCs, social entities, etc
me: should be generated as well in world creation
me: DF does this to an extent
me: but he simply hasn't gotten around to adding more complexity to it
me: because of course he won't accept help other than from his bro
me: also he'll clearly die of diabetes in ten years
Andrew: yeah, he seemed alittle nuts from the interview
me: and he doesn't drink water
me: just soda
me: and no vegetables
me: and obviously gets little exercise
Andrew: ok, ok
Andrew: setting?
Andrew: jsut give me a direction to go in with simple art
Andrew: brown? futuristic?
Andrew: meta?
me: I say in terms of era, make it be akin to 18th century style and tech
me: except with biological enhancements produced by alchemists
me: or some such things
Andrew: arcanum?
me: yeah, that's kind of close to that
me: except arcanum is more late 19th century

me: this would have less tech
Andrew: i never played it
me: I did for a bit
me: anyway, the real key is to have a dynamic working economy
me: starting off with just food in terms of what you program, then go from there
me: have individuals farm and hunt and have their ability to contribute cultural/tech/etc points to their town, and in turn their kingdom, be based on getting enough of two different kinds of food
me: meat and produce
me: that will start to provide for varying degrees of sophistication within a kingdom and to a lesser degree within its various towns
Andrew: this is all great stuff
me: and have taxation
Andrew: but I cant do any of this myself - I can really jsut make the engine and will have to come back to world modelling later
me: later you can add in potters, weavers, etc, all of whom both sell their goods to farmers and each other as well as to the town
Andrew: basically - i need an open world engine with procedural world
Andrew: with lots of npcs that allow compelx social modelling
me: and also soldiers who are payed from taxes and who vary from civ to civ based on the technology level and ability to equip them based on the kingdom's stores of metal, etc
Andrew: as well as a dynamically modelled economy and such
me: yeah, that's exactly what I'm looking for
me: I can give you a number of easily-implemented ideas on relationships
me: and attributes that would inform individual actions
Andrew: combat?
me: would be handled based on statistics in world gen and also in game to some degree, I imagine
Andrew: so, what does that mean?
Andrew: first person
Andrew: you see another player
Andrew: you ... ?
me: handle it like morrowind or daggerfall or anything else
me: stats, rolls, etc
Andrew: run up to the other player and click
me: yeah, you probably won't be able to institute physics or anything
Andrew: thats easier than world modelling
me: oic
Andrew: I was thinking some simple melee fighting system based on bushido blade or jed knoght 2 or prince of persia or such
Andrew: very limited moves, available in sets of simple stances
Andrew: basically, something I can do in a week

Andrew: because as I havent mentioned yet
Andrew: Im only alloting myself a week for this project
me: sounds reasonable
Andrew: I went to a 24hr game hack day at union sq
Andrew: and me and qunt from work spent 18hrs there
Andrew: and the two of us managed to program and 3d copy of star control 2 melee mode really easily
Andrew: with shitter design and sound, of course
Andrew: but the mechanics were trivial and I have lots of experience with 3d graphics now
Andrew: so I have to learn this new language for work
Andrew: and I have abotu 2 weeks to learn it and do nothing else
Andrew: so Im goign to make an opengl based multiplayer game as an excuse to learn this language
me: so you're off work for those two weeks?
me: so, this game will be multiplayer?
Andrew: but i only have 2 weeks, which means I have 1 week because it will take 2x what i estimate
Andrew: the lang is for a server based opengl graphics application ill be building
Andrew: so I want to make a server-based opengl graphics app
Andrew: which means mmo in a browser with opengl
Andrew: hi concurrency / opengl / near-realtime communication
Andrew: so basically
Andrew: I can make a world you can walk around in with npcs
Andrew: and do one feature
Andrew: and use art from somethign like this
Andrew: http://www.turbosquid.com/
Andrew: and ive got about $500 I can probably pour at art under the excuse of learning materials